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FM AMCONSUL LAGOS  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8358  
RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA PRIORITY 8195  
INFO RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0072  
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0046  
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0053  
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0075  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH AFB UK  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000020

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DOE FOR GPERSON, CGAY  
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS, SRENENDER, DFIELDS  
COMMERCE FOR KBURRESS  
STATE PASS USTR FOR ASST USTR SLISER  
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION FOR MARAD  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART  
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT  
STATE PASS EXIM FOR JRICHTER  
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/27/2016

TAGS: [EPET](#) [ENERG](#) [ASEC](#) [PTER](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: HOSTAGES TO BE RELEASED, BUT DELTA "ALMOST IN  
STATE OF INSURRECTION"

REF: LAGOS 1419

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Classified By: Consul General Brian Browne for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) Summary: Bayelsa State Secretary Godknows Igali said January 11 that the hostage takers agreed in negotiations to release the three Italian and one Lebanese employees of Agip kidnapped December 7. This group claims disinterest in money and that they committed the kidnappings due to political and development issues related to the Niger Delta, according to Igali. A smaller group that kidnapped nine South Korean workers from a residential camp at Ogu base near Yenagoa January 10 also told Igali they would release their captives in the afternoon of January 11. It appears, however, that the releases have not yet occurred. The Delta is "almost in a state of insurrection", Igali said. End Summary.

12. (C) Pol-Econ Chief spoke January 11 with Bayelsa State Secretary Godknows Igali who is negotiating the release of

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three Italians and One Lebanese employee of Agip kidnapped on December 7. The Delta is "almost in a state of insurrection", the tired Igali said. He had come to Lagos for an early morning meeting with representatives of The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND). The group had refused to meet in the Delta, Igali said. This group refused to release the hostages and, unlike the criminal elements who engage in opportunistic kidnappings to earn a ransom, expressed disinterest in a pay-off. The group is interested only in political and development issues relating to the Niger Delta, Igali noted. During his morning meeting, Igali appealed to them by saying that their actions

would only further harm development of the Delta because expatriates and oil workers are unable to travel to the Delta, and oil is Bayelsa's sole source of income. According to Igali, he was able to persuade them to release the hostages. As he spoke, he was heading to the airport for a flight to Abuja to finalize arrangements for the release.

¶3. (C) Another militant group had seized nine South Koreans, Igali said. He has been engaged in negotiations with them as well, and anticipates that the hostages will be released late in the afternoon of January 11.

¶4. (C) Pol-Econ Chief spoke with South Korean Ambassador Lee on January 11. Armed attackers invaded the residential portion of Ogu base in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, at around 4:50 AM on January 10, the Ambassador said. Gunfire was exchanged and dynamite exploded outside the camp during the incident, the Ambassador said. (Note: Subsequent reports indicated that unexploded dynamite was found outside the camp. End note) Although there were fifteen people in the camp, only nine South Korean workers and one Nigerian were kidnapped; six other South Koreans escaped capture in the confusion. The workers all had been engaged in pipeline construction, although the Ambassador does not know with which international oil company they were under contract. Apparently not in close communication with Igali, the South Korean envoy stated no group had yet claimed responsibility for the incident.

¶5. (C) Comment: Igali seems to have been successful in making contact with the individuals now billing themselves as MEND, and in negotiating the release of both groups of expatriate hostages. We caught him as he was rushing to catch a plane, and he did not have a chance to elaborate fully on his statements. However, while he predicted release of the two sets of hostages, he was pessimistic on prospects for resolution of the underlying causes of the Niger Delta crisis. What he implied was that the pattern of kidnappings

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established last year would continue and perhaps escalate in ¶2007. (Ref). Moreover, it appears that the releases of the hostages have not yet occurred.  
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